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Editorial

The GPH is sabotaging the peace talks

In the US-Aquino regime's desire to entrap both the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) into entering unjust peace agreements, Malacañang feigned interest in the "special track" which involves calling for an immediate ceasefire based on a general declaration of national unity and just peace signed by both the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the NDFP.

The NDFP has long been offering the "special track" in response to repeated demands by the Aquino regime for an immediate ceasefire. In line with the "special track," the two parties may enter into a ceasefire agreement if an accord could be reached on further advancing national freedom, democracy and human rights; an alliance could be formed between the Aquino regime and the NDFP in the form of a Committee for National Unity, Peace and Development; and genuine agrarian reform, rural development and national industrialization are implemented. These form the bases for a temporary ceasefire to be entered into by the New People's Army (NPA) and its militia and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Philippine National Police (PNP) and their paramilitary for-

ces.

Part of Malacañang's ruses were to send "special emissaries" led by Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs Ronald Llamas in the last quarter of 2012, and to offer a meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam in early 2013 between Benigno Aquino III and Jose Ma. Sison, NDFP chief political consultant, as well as detained NDFP consultant Alan Jazmines. To create a favorable atmosphere for the "special track," the NDFP declared an extended ceasefire from December 20 to January 15.

But nothing came out of the talks on the "special track" held in December and February since Aquino's "special emissaries" were not authorized to enter into agreements or sign documents. It became apparent that the GPH's previous offer of a Hanoi meeting between Aquino and Sison was not a serious one either.

All the GPH wanted was to secure the NDFP's surrender through a hastily drawn declaration of unity bereft of substance and for the NDFP to be caught in a ceasefire of indefinite duration.

Now that the "special track" has come to nought and there is no clarity in sight on the resumption of the regular peace negotiations, Aquino's propagandists are spinning yarns



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about the regime's supposed desire to continue the peace negotiations and heaping the blame on the NDFP for the stalled talks.

In any case, Aquino and his minions could not cover up the fact that they have paralyzed the peace negotiations. The Third Party Facilitator from the Royal Norwegian Government was witness to all the NDFP's efforts to conduct serious negotiations and the GPH's stonewalling and maneuvering to sabotage the talks.

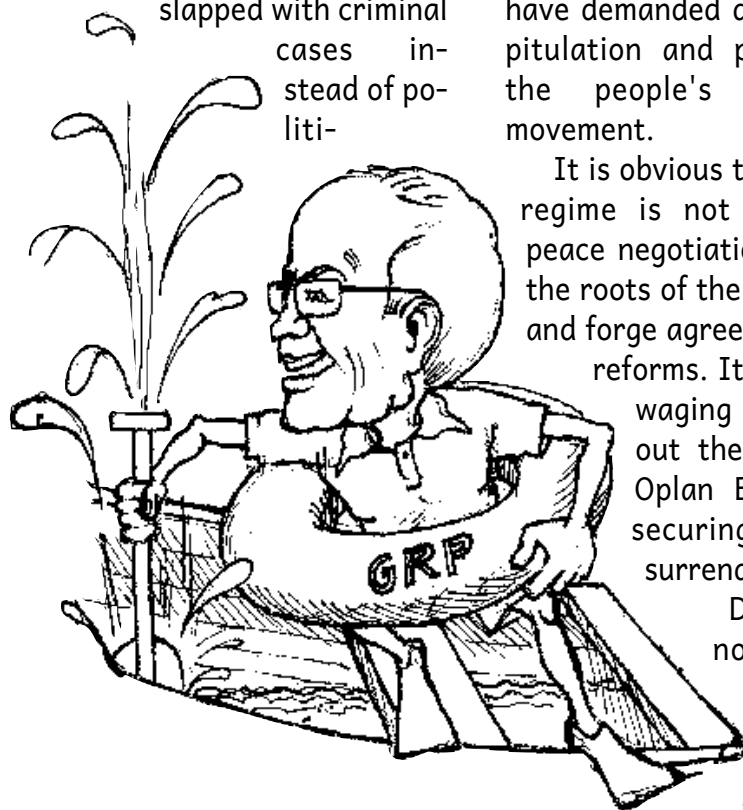
The GPH's conduct during the "special track" comes as no surprise. On the eve of the resumption of formal peace talks in February 2011, the Aquino regime showed contempt for the peace process by illegally arresting Alan Jazmines, one of the NDFP's key consultants. Aquino and his minions likewise assailed The Hague Joint Declaration which sets the framework of the talks and the substantive agenda in their proper order.

Aquino also declared the Joint Agreement on Safety and

Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) as inoperative to justify their refusal to release from prison the JASIG-protected NDFP consultants and personnel and blocked the NDFP reconstruction of its list of JASIG-protected consultants, security officers and staff.

Nonetheless, detainees that are being linked by the GPH to the revolutionary movement and armed struggle are being

slapped with criminal cases instead of political-



cal cases in violation of the Hernandez doctrine of the reactionary government's own laws.

From the beginning, Aquino's minions have avoided any discussion on the necessity of addressing the roots of the armed conflict through social, economic and political reforms. Instead, at every turn in every meeting of the negotiating panels and special delegations, they have demanded directly the capitulation and pacification of the people's revolutionary movement.

It is obvious that the Aquino regime is not interested in peace negotiations to address the roots of the armed conflict and forge agreements on basic reforms. It is hell bent on waging war, carrying out the US-instigated Oplan Bayanihan and securing the NDFP's surrender.

Despite Aquino's utilization of the talks as merely for show, the revolutionary

movement remains determined to tread this path to assert the resolution of the roots of the civil war through unity and alliance on the basis of a program that advances national sovereignty and democratic change.

At the same time, the Party and the NPA will continue to intensify the armed struggle and the program of advancing from the stage of strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate.

This is the people's only guarantee that the firm economic, political and social foundations for a just and lasting peace are put in place. Whether or not there are peace negotiations, this remains an aspiration of the revolutionary movement. **AB**

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NPA launches intensive and coordinated armed actions

Red fighters launched successive and coordinated armed actions in Butuan City, Agusan del Norte, Compostela Valley, Northern Samar and Isabela. Up to 24 soldiers were killed and several others wounded.

Butuan and Agusan del Norte. Eleven soldiers and five policemen were killed in three separate gunbattles in Butuan City and Carmen, Agusan del Norte on March 13-17. There were no casualties on the side of the New People's Army (NPA).

Three soldiers from the 58th IB were killed when an NPA unit met with gunfire patrolling troops in Sitio Alicapawan, Barangay Manoligao, Carmen, Agusan del Norte on March 17.

On March 15, five soldiers from the same battalion were killed in a clash with an NPA unit in Sitio Minlangit, Barangay Rojas, also in Carmen town.

Three soldiers from the 58th IB and five policemen from the Regional Mobile Group (RMG) who were among those who responded to a disarming operation were killed in an NPA ambush in Bonbon, Butuan City on March 13. Earlier that day, Red fighters disarmed two policemen of a 9 mm pistol at an NPA checkpoint in the same barangay.

Meanwhile, on March 14, an NPA unit disarmed a village chief's underling in Barangay Cahayagan, Carmen, seizing a shotgun and a cal .22 rifle. The people's guerrillas also confiscated a cal .38 revolver from an abusive ex-CAFGU element in Sitio Mahayahay, Barangay Lunotan, Gingoog City on March 15.

Compostela Valley. Four soldiers from the 71st IB were killed and an undetermined number were wounded after be-

ing hit by command-detonated explosives in Elizalde, Maco, Compostela Valley on March 15. An officer of an AFP Special Operations Team in Paquibato District was also shot and wounded by the NPA 1st Pulang Bagani Company that day.

A policeman was also stopped at an NPA checkpoint in Barangay Mainit, Nabunturan at around 6 a.m. of March 18. The checkpoint formed part of the NPA's regular operations in the area against bad elements and abusive Special Operations Teams operating under Oplan Bayanihan.

Currently under the custody of the NPA in Mindanao's Front 27 is PO3 Ruben Magno Nojapa of the Nabunturan PNP.

Davao City. Three soldiers were killed and eight others were wounded when Red fighters of the NPA 2nd Pulang Bagani Company ambushed a composite force of the 84th IB, PNP Special Action Force, CAFGU and the Lumad vigilante group Blackfighters in Barangay Carmen, Baguio District, Davao City on March 8. The

people's guerrillas were able to seize an M16, an M14 and rounds of ammunition.

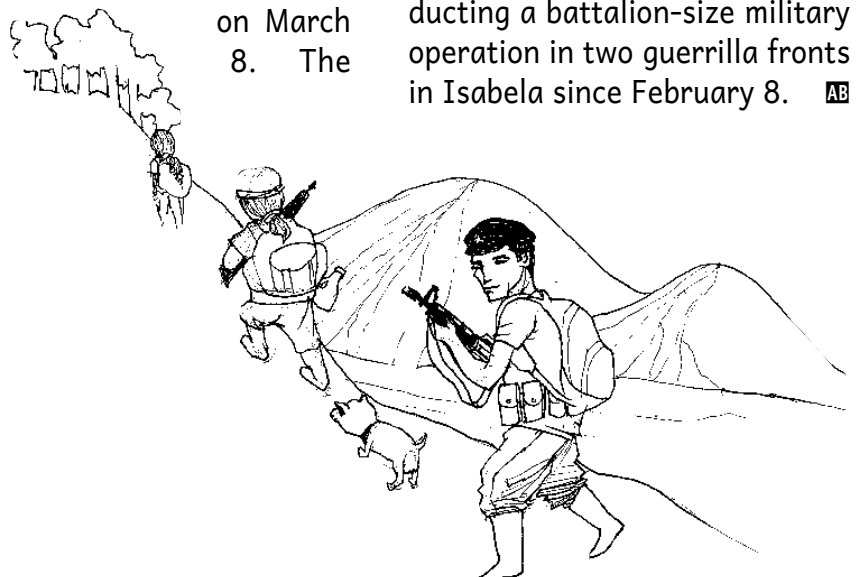
Before the ambush, the composite enemy force had been marauding the villages of Cada-lian, Tambobong, Tawan-tawan, Carmen and Tamayong in Baguio District for more than a week. This punitive measure was conducted to give justice to the victims of brutal military operations and suppress the 84th IB's renewed use of the Lumad vigilante Blackfighters to sow terror in the area, said Ka Simon Santiago, Political Director of the NPA Southern Mindanao Regional Command.

Northern Samar. A soldier spy from the 20th IB who was masquerading as a civilian was killed in a military action launched by Red fighters of the NPA Efren Martires Command and the people's militia in Barangay Roxas, Lopez de Vega on March 1.

Isabela. Four soldiers were killed and eight others were wounded when a six-man NPA team blasted a patrolling squad of the 86th IB Charlie Company with command-detonated explosives at 1 a.m. of February 15.

According to initial reports, the ambush was followed by two other ambushes in the villages of Gangalan and Casala in San Mariano town on March 7.

The 86th IB has been conducting a battalion-size military operation in two guerrilla fronts in Isabela since February 8. **AB**



9th ID extorting from politicians in Albay

Elements of a military group under the 9th Infantry Division in Bicol have been misrepresenting themselves as members of the New People's Army and using the name of NDF-Bicol spokesperson Ka Greg Bañares to extort from a number of candidates in Albay and Camarines Sur in exchange for issuing bogus "permits to campaign."

Two mayors from Albay province and two vice mayors running for different posts were milked of up to P50,000.00, several sacks of rice and other items. The group also tried to extort from another candidate for provincial board member. Reports have also come in about extortion activities against other candidates in Camarines Sur. **AB**

NPA simultaneously harasses 10 detachments in Bicol

Red fighters under the Celso Minguez Command launched coordinated attacks on March 10 on 22nd IB detachments in the villages of Casay, Casiguran; Purog, Bulusan; Baligang, Gubat; San Roque, Bacon; Banwang Daan, Matnog and two detachments of the 31st IB in Barangay Rizal, Gubat and Barangay Rizal, Casiguran. On the same day, members of the Santos Binamira Command also attacked the 22nd IB detachment in Barangay Palanog, Camalig and Barangay Villa Petrona, Libon in Albay. The day after, Red fighters of the Eduardo Olbara Command attacked a "peace and development team" of the 42nd IB in Barangay Sooc, Bato, Camarines Sur.

These military actions were responses to the people's longstanding demand to punish the troops of the butcher 9th Infantry Division because of its long record of human rights abuses, said Gregorio "Ka Greg" Bañares, NDF-Bicol spokesperson.

In a related development, thousands launched protest actions in Camarines Sur, Albay and Sorsogon provinces on February 25 to expose and assail the brutality of Oplan Bayanihan. They gathered in the towns of Bato in Camarines Sur; Guinobatan, Albay; and Barcelona, Sorsogon to demand the pullout of soldiers conducting "peace and development activities" in their communities and a stop to the brutal Oplan Bayanihan campaign. They called for justice for the victims of human rights violations. **AB**

NPA front condemns human rights violations in Abra

The Procopio Tauro Front under the Agustin Begnalen Command condemned the 41st IB's violations of the people's human rights in Lagangilang and Licuan-Baay towns in northern Abra.

January 30. Soldiers of the 41st IB arbitrarily arrested a 14-year old boy named "Boboy" (true name withheld), a resident of Barangay Lenneng, Licuan-Baay, Abra. Boboy had gone to the mountains near Palpalitpit, Cayapa, Lagangilang with a man, also from Barangay Lenneng to retrieve a carabao. They met the soldiers on the way. Boboy froze with fear but his companion was able to flee.

Boboy was arrested and brought to the military detachment in Bituen, Lenneng to make him admit to being a member of the New People's Army (NPA). For the second time, Boboy re-

fused to speak. The day after, the military brought the boy to Bakiro in Licuan-Baay town. Boboy was released only when the town mayor vouched that he was a civilian of minor age and was in fact, a nephew of his.

In Barangay Cayapa, Lagangilang, residents are being summoned to the military headquarters to prove that they are not NPA supporters. Villagers in Sitio Palpalitpit, on the other hand, have been barred from leaving the barrio, causing huge disruptions in their livelihoods.

January 29. The military attempted to kill Meymar Alcantara, 25, a resident of Barangay

Nagtipulan, Lagangilang. He was gathering firewood in the forest at 11 a.m. when three uniformed soldiers armed with M16 rifles suddenly approached him. Their faces and nameplates were concealed with handkerchieves. The soldiers kicked him in the thigh and ordered him to admit to being an NPA member. They also kept on hitting him in the face.

Not content, they took the victim's knife and wounded him near the eyes and on the chest. They carved the number "1" on his right temple and an "X" mark on his left temple. They put another "X" mark on his chest. They next pointed a gun at his head and pulled the trigger, but the weapon failed to fire. The soldiers stopped only when they saw his Voter's I.D., which proved that he was really a civilian. The troopers ran off to regroup with their fellow soldiers, but not before threatening to come back at him. **AB**

PNP illegally arrests NDFP consultant in Cordillera

The Cordillera People's Democratic Front (CPDF) condemned the illegal arrest by the Philippine National Police (PNP) Regional Intelligence Unit-14 of Kennedy Bangibang, a CPDF officer and consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines on Cordillera and National Minority Affairs. Bangibang was arrested when the bus he was riding was stopped at a PNP checkpoint in Bangao Proper, Buguias, Benguet province on February 23, according to CPDF spokesperson Simon "Ka Filiw" Naogsan.

Bangibang, 51, is an Igorot from a farflung village in the

Cordillera who became a CPDF member in the first quarter of 1987. He was one of several youth and students from Baguio who integrated with the peasant masses and became a fulltime activist working among the minorities. He eventually became a leader of the revolutionary underground movement.

Bangibang was arrested a day after the Team of Facilitators of the Royal Norwegian Government went to Malacñang, where the Aquino government said that the peace with talks between the GPH and the NDFP would continue. **AB**

67th IB harasses Cristina Jose's mourners

The 67th IB blocked some 150 victims of typhoon Pablo from Compostela Valley who had planned on attending a tribute for Cristina Jose, a Barug Katawhan leader who was slain in Binondo, Baganga, Davao Oriental on March 4. The mourners, who were stopped at military checkpoints in Mati, Lupon, Banaybanay and Manay towns and whose bus was obstructed by a suspiciously stalled vehicle in Tarragona municipality, all in Davao Oriental, failed to join the tribute held on the night of March 13. They reached Baganga on the afternoon of March 14.

The intense harassment, however, did not deter them from joining almost a thousand people who condoled with Jose's family and marched in the funeral procession. They chanted "Justice for Cristina Jose!" Aside from her relatives, friends and townmates, the funeral cortege included Bayan Muna second nominee Carlos Zarate; Datu Monico Cayug of Kalumaran; and Sheena Suazo of BAYAN-Southern Mindanao.

Before she was killed, Jose bared the military harassment that she and other victims suffered after joining protests at the DSWD office in Davao City. Jose and the 67th IB commander had also figured in a verbal tussle, where the latter branded her as "the NPA's councilor." This was after Jose assailed the numerous requirements that the victims had to comply with before they could be given relief goods, and exposed various other anomalies such as the overpricing of the temporary shelters built for those who had lost their homes.

Because of these exposés, Jose was one of the Barug Katawhan leaders that DSWD Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman planned to hail to court. **AB**

Leonard Co's killers slapped with lesser charges

The National Democratic Front-Eastern Visayas (NDF-EV) assailed the US-Aquino regime for downgrading the charges filed against the killers of Leonard Co, Sofronio Cortez and Julius Borromeo from murder to homicide. The Department of Justice issued this decision in March against the 19th IB troops responsible for the crime.

Co, a renowned scientist was conducting research in a forested area in Kananga, Leyte on November 15, 2010 when he and his group were shot at by 19th IB troops led by Lt. Ronald Ochimar.

Even if the people they were targeting kept on shouting that they were civilians, the soldiers refused to hold their fire. When the 19th IB realized its mistake after the shooting, it concocted a story that an encounter had ensued between the New People's Army (NPA) and the military.

In a statement, the NPA Mt. Amandewin Command which operates in Leyte said that there was no guerrilla unit in that area that day. Other witnesses corroborated this.

NDF-EV spokesperson Fr. Santiago Salas said the 8th ID and the 19th IB must be punished for covering up the massacre. The 19th IB has yet to be punished for its involvement in two earlier massacre cases in Leyte.

The NDF-EV supports the families of Co and his two companions in seeking justice. The US-Aquino regime and its troops must be held accountable for their continuing violations of human rights. **AB**

Aquino's abandonment of UP and the public education system

The youth and the people's anger flared against rising college tuition fees and the commercialization of education under the Aquino regime after the suicide of Kristel Tejada, a student at the University of the Philippines in Manila. Tejada was forced to go on a leave of absence after failing to pay her tuition.

Tejada, 16, took her life on March 15 in her family's home in Tondo, Manila. Despite several appeals from her parents, the UP Manila administration ordered her to file for a leave of absence in March after failing to settle ₱10,000 in school fees. Tejada's suicide bared UP's antipoor policies in the face of budgetary inadequacies under the Aquino regime.

STFAP: Tuition fee hikes

For close to 25 years, the UP has been implementing the Socialized Tuition and Financial Assistance Program (STFAP) allegedly as a means of helping impoverished UP students. Students are categorized into different brackets, and depending on estimates of their social status, they pay full or part tuition or are exempted from paying. Those in Bracket A pay the full amount while those in Bracket E are not required to pay.

But the STFAP's real objectives are a far cry from its avowed purpose. In truth, STFAP is a program to enhance UP's income in the face of dwindling subsidies from the national government. Earning ₱500 million in 2007-2009, it allotted a mere ₱25 million to financial assistance.

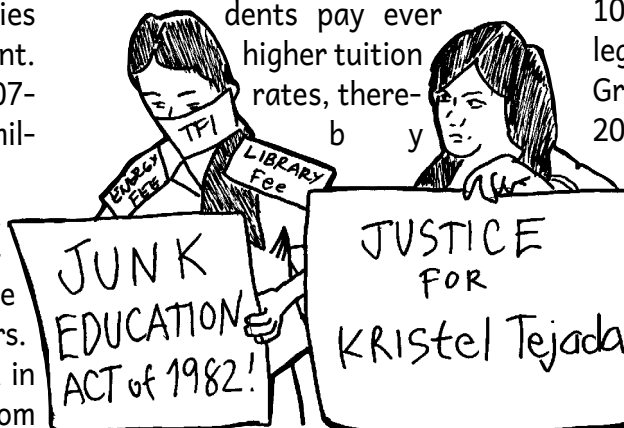
The STFAP has served as a smokescreen for the implementation of successive tuition fee hikes in the past several years. When it was first implemented in 1989, tuition fees soared from

₱40 to ₱300 per unit. In 2007, tuition fees at UP were hiked by 300% towards ₱1,000 per unit or almost ₱42,000 per year.

The STFAP is antipoor. Students have to comply with so many requisites just to prove that they came from poor families. As long as they are unable to prove this, they are categorized at a higher bracket and charged accordingly.

In implementing a new system of classification in 2011, the number of students categorized in Bracket A rose by 3,000%. They were required to pay ₱1,500 per unit. Meanwhile, in 2012, only 8% of applicants for Bracket E were approved by the UP. The number of students in the lowest bracket plummeted from 20% in 1991 to a mere 1% last year. This has been made worse by various other UP policies such as forced leaves of absence in case of failure to settle one's debts, as in Tejada's case.

The STFAP exploits the fact that most UP students come from the middle to higher strata of society. The system of bracketing is calculated to make most students pay ever



raising the university's income.

The STFAP is set to be implemented in all State Universities and Colleges (SUC) by 2016 in accordance with the Aquino regime's Roadmap to Public Higher Education Reform.

Neglecting SUCs

The implementation of the STFAP at UP is part of the national government's overall policy of neglecting public colleges and universities. Aquino himself declared in 2011 that subsidies to SUCs will gradually be reduced to push them to become self-sufficient and have their own funding.

In 2010 and 2011, there were no budgetary allocations for the construction of new buildings and facilities (capital outlay). The budget for teachers' and employees' salaries was also reduced.

The Aquino regime boasts of a 44% raise in this year's budget, but only after years without any budgetary hikes. In fact, the Aquino government subsidizes only up to 67% of the SUCs' budgets, the lowest in 30 years.

The regime has thus been requiring schools to commercialize—i.e., engage in income-generating projects, raise tuition and other fees and create courses prioritized by the government to generate cheap labor.

A case in point is the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, which has the highest enrolment in the country. It has slapped a 100% tuition fee hike at the College of Law, Open University and Graduate School. Meanwhile, a 200% tuition fee hike has been scheduled at the Technological University of the Philippines.

Neglecting public colleges and universities dovetails with strengthening private colleges run by big capitalists.

Reducing the capability of state colleges to provide free or affordable education pushes more students to enter private universities.

Rising tuition fees in private schools

The Aquino regime has refused to put a stop to rising tuition and other fees. Through the Commission on Higher Education, it has even served as the spokesperson for private schools by justifying incessant hikes in tuition and other fees. Last year, almost 300 private schools raised their fees by at least 10% per unit. Some of the schools that will be raising fees this year are Adamson University (10%); and the University of the East and University of Sto. Tomas (both 5%). Meanwhile 28 schools in Bicol are also planning to raise fees. The list is expected to grow before the school year opens. **AB**

Justice for Kristel!

The death of UP Manila student Kristel Tejada has spurred protest actions at the University of the Philippines (UP) System campuses.

The National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) called for a weeklong "Black Protest" on March 18, three days after Tejada's death. On the second day of the protest, students at UP Manila and UP Diliman walked out of their classes.

A weeklong university-wide period of mourning was declared by students at UP Los Baños in Laguna. They supported calls from teachers and students of UP Manila for UP Manila chancellor Manuel Agulto and vice chancellor Josephine de Luna to step down. At a rally, they demanded the junking of the "no late payment policy" and "forced leave of absence." In the evening, they held a candle-lighting ceremony.

In Iloilo, UPV Samasa led student protest actions at the UP Visayas campuses in Iloilo City and Miag-ao town. They demanded reforms in the tuition fee scheme and more funds for education. A similar mass action was held in UP Mindanao.

Students wrapped black cloth on the university symbol, the Oblation, in all UP campuses.

In solidarity, students at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Far Eastern University, University of the East and Adamson University walked out of their classrooms.

An on line petition initiated by a former reporter also garnered widespread support, receiving 5,000 signatures in two days. This is reportedly the biggest and fastest education-related petition on the web.

In the face of the protests and demands for his resignation, UP Manila Chancellor Manuel Agulto announced the abolition of the "no late payment policy." **AB**

Intensifying military abuses against Filipinos in Sabah

"Operation Daulat," a massive military operation in Malaysia against armed Filipinos in Sabah has been running for more than three weeks. Almost ten battalions of soldiers and police supported by the entire Air Force have been mobilized by the Malaysian government to cordon a four square-kilometer area in Lahad Datu and adjacent districts. This area, where Filipinos from Sulu are entrenched has been indiscriminately bombed from the air, bombarded with artillery fire and scoured by policemen and soldiers.

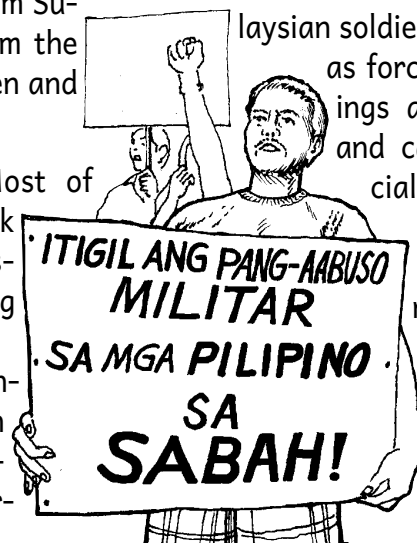
The Malaysian military operation's declared objective is to pursue and defeat the 235 armed personnel of the "Royal Army" political expedition sent by the Sultanate of Sulu in February. But a massive suppression campaign has been launched by Malaysia victimizing Filipino resi-

dents of Sabah. Most of them are Orang Suluk (natives of Sulu island), Bajao, Tausug and Samal.

Because of the intense suppression campaign, many Filipinos have been hur-

riedly fleeing Sabah for Sulu. On March 6-12, more than 500 evacuees descended on the towns of Sibutu and Bongao in Tawi-tawi, Sulu. They were from Lahad Datu, Semporna, Tawau, Kunak and Sandakan districts in Sabah.

They recounted the numerous abuses committed by Malaysian soldiers and police, such as forcible arrests, beatings and incarcerations and cases of extrajudicial killings. The Malaysian military operations have resulted in massive economic dislocation. Filipinos are unable to leave their homes to work or



look for sources of income out of fear of being arbitrarily arrested by Malaysian security forces.

More than 100 Filipinos have been illegally arrested, beaten up and jailed because of suspected links to the armed groups. Among those killed by Malaysian soldiers was Jumadil Taradji, a male resident of Sandakan, Sabah. According to his sister Amira, also a resident of Sandakan who was raised in Davao City, policemen conducted a surprise raid on their village on the night of March 4. "They dragged all of the men out of their homes and beat them up. Then they ordered them to run and shot them."

The residents were so terrified that they were forced to flee even if it was night time, using any available transport. They added that the security forces did not spare even those who had valid documents to show at immigration stations. Detainees are not given food. The most brutal treatment is reserved for Tausug. Malaysian forces do not even bother to conduct an investigation and bring them straight to jail.

The Malaysian government has taken pains to

conceal its massive suppression of Filipinos in Sabah. Foreign journalists, especially those from the Philippines, are barred from entering Sabah to gather information and report on the events in the area.

The intense repression of Filipinos in Sabah has earned widespread condemnation from various sectors in the Philippines. The Communist Party of the Philippines had earlier condemned the Aquino regime for its support for the Malaysian government's armed suppression of Filipinos there. All Aquino did was to express "concern" for the oppression and repression being suffered by the Filipinos in Sabah.

On March 13, thirty-one representatives of 535 evacuees filed a petition with the Public Attorneys Office (PAO) in behalf of their relatives arrested by Malaysian authorities. They asked the PAO's assistance in repatriating their fellow countrymen who have been detained in Sabah even if they were documented migrants. They also asked the PAO to investigate the conditions of evacuees who were mistreated by Malaysian authorities. **AB**

Expansion of rubber plantations

Like pineapple, banana and oil palm plantations, rubber plantations in Mindanao are also vast in size. In 2010, they encompassed 138,710 hectares. Based on projected expansions of the worldwide demand for rubber, the US-Aquino regime plans to expand plantations by 200,000 hectares in 2016 and a million hectares by 2023. The Philippines is currently the world's sixth largest producer of rubber, after Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia.

Rubber was first planted in Basilan by an American, Dr. James Strong, in 1910. Strong eventually sold his company Basilan Rubber Plantation to his business partner J.M. Menzi, who put up the first ever commercial plantation in 1914, the American Rubber Plantation. It cleared vast tracts of land in Isabela and Lamitan towns, both in Basilan. Eventually, the company was bought by B.F. Goodrich.

Menzi expanded the plantations towards the southern part of Isabela town. One of Menzi's men Arnold Winniger became interested in putting up his own

plantation. He had land cleared in Tumahubong and Sumisip for new rubber plantations, with the Cuevas-Pamaran-Antonio-Flores clan of Lamitan as his partners. This was followed by investments from a British-Malayan company Sime Darby Corp. on a 4,000-hectare rubber plantation in Sumisip and Tipo-tipo

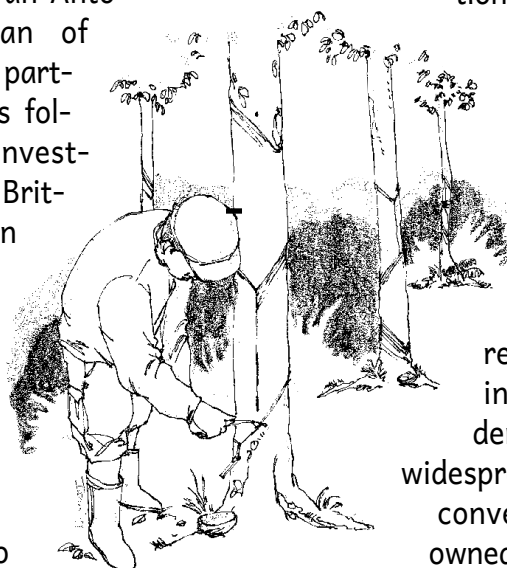
towns.

In the early 1980s, major tire manufacturers like Goodyear, Firestone and B.F. Goodrich ran their own plantations ranging from 2,000 to 3,000 hectares.

The expansion of rubber plantations was thwarted by the intensification of armed conflicts in Mindanao since the 1970s until the fall of the Marcos dictatorship. With the advent of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) in 1988, plantations owned by foreign corporations were broken up

for show and replaced with "plantation cooperatives."

Since 2003, there has been a renewed drive to plant rubber in response to growing international demand. There were widespread programs to convert privately-owned lands covered by



Agrarian Reform Communities for this purpose. In 2006, up to 70,000 hectares of ARCs were included in these programs.

Since 2010, rubber production was up to 395,237 metric tons, according to the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, with 85% of it exported.

The Zamboanga Peninsula has the biggest share of rubber production (43%). To strengthen production, the Bureau of Investment approved a ₱686-million rubber project through the Zanorte Palm-Rubber Plan, Inc.

There are three big tire-making companies that buy dried rubber: Dunlop, Bridgestone and Yokohama. A nursery for rubber seedlings has been built on a 2,000-hectare area in Zamboanga del Norte. The American-owned Green Oils Dev. Corp. runs a 75,000-100,000-hectare rubber plantation in several towns of Zamboanga del Norte. Yokohama Tire Phil., Inc., a Japanese-owned corporation based in Clark has allotted ₱27 billion for a targeted two-and-a-half-fold expansion in tire production. From the current volume of 21,000/day, it plans to produce 50,000 tires per day by 2017.

The reactionary government claims that rubber production is beneficial to farmers. According to the Department of Agriculture, more than 90% of rubber plantations are owned by farmers owning two to ten hectares of land.

In fact, small farmers could not afford to plant rubber due to the huge capitalization needed, which comes to ₱140,000 per hectare. With their small landholdings, they are unable to comply with the required three to six-meter gap between trees. Thus, they could not guarantee continued production for multinational corporations.

Farmer-beneficiaries of CARP did not truly benefit from land distribution, because their landholdings were pooled into cooperatives for planting rubber. There are nine big ARCs devoted to rubber production. Most of the time, the farmers end up selling their rights to the land.

The big plantations owned by big landlords, comprador bourgeoisie and a number of multinational corporations are the ones that really benefit the most from planting rubber. They also usually control the rubber processing plants and companies. **AB**

What is rubber and how is it used?

The first seedlings used in Southeast Asian rubber plantations all came from Brazil. It takes five to seven years before the trees produce enough sap for tapping. Rubber trees remain productive for 25 to 30 years. The sap is first processed to make latex, cup lumps and rubber sheets which are bought by big manufacturers like B.F. Goodrich.

Rubber sap is the basic ingredient in the production of tires and other transportation, industrial, consumer and medical needs. It is also used in transmission and elevator belts, hoses and tubes, industrial lining and bridge bearings, among others. Rubber is also used in consumer items like balls for various sports, erasers and footwear. It is likewise used in manufacturing medical equipment and products like condoms, catheters and gloves.

On the other hand, rubber wood is used in making furniture and other applications (parquet, wood panels, kitchen utensils, novelty items, charcoal and cement). **AB**

Barricade at Payatas vs demolition

The Samahan ng Maralitang Magkakapitbahay sa Payatas (SMMP) has put up a barricade since March 19 and conducted a noise barrage the day after to protest and protect themselves against a possible demolition by the Quezon City local government.

The deadline given to Payatas residents to voluntarily demolish their houses was March 20. The demolition will give way to the construction of an eight meter-wide main road for the Bistekville 5 housing project that will be built on a 1.6-hectare lot currently occupied by 400 impoverished families.

The urban poor groups condemned the housing project, saying that only affluent Quezon City residents will benefit from it because of all the requirements they should comply with and the ₱400,000 requisite for PAG-IBIG members. Quezon City Mayor Herbert Bautista has merely been using the poor for his own interest as a businessman.

The houses of 20 families had already been demolished on February 7-8. Like the other residents, they had already been living in the area for about 20 years.

A number of urban poor communities in Quezon City have already been slated for demolition to give way to the mayor's housing project. In November 2011, a number of residents of Sitio Looban, Barangay Kaligayahan, Novaliches were wounded and arrested when a truck rammed through the barricade they put up to stop the demolition of their community. The residents were opposing the construction in their area of a Bistekville project because they would be relocated to a site without basic services and far away from their sources of livelihood.

Women against the US-Aquino regime

The Philippines under Benigno Aquino III is a dangerous place for women and children. This was the judgment of 15,000 members of progressive women's organizations and their supporters that marched on March 8 on the occasion of International Working Women's Day.

"Women, arise and advance! Resist the US-Aquino regime's intensifying attacks on our lives, livelihoods and rights!" was their cry as they marched towards the US Embassy, Liwasang Bonifacio and Mendiola Bridge. Similar protests were held in Baguio, Laguna, Batangas, Iloilo, Bacolod City, Davao City and other cities and provinces.

They said 18 women and four minors have become victims of extrajudicial killing under the US-Aquino regime. In addition, there are 33 women political prisoners currently incarcerated in various detention centers in the country.

The latest women victims of the regime's fascist repression were Cristina Jose, Barug Katawhan leader who was mercilessly gunned down on March 4 and the women activists who were dispersed and arrested after a protest at Malacañang on March 7.

There are also growing numbers of women and minors raped by the military, police or CAFGU. Twelve cases were documented in 2012, including the rape of two teenagers by soldiers in Mankayan, Benguet. This March, the revolutionary people's court indicted three soldiers in the gang-rape of a 17-year old girl in Baras, Rizal in October 2011. Despite the case already filed in the reactionary court, the perpetrators are allowed to roam free and have even had the gall to threaten the victim's family.

Women victims have no hope of attaining justice under the Aquino regime. Justice continues to elude Rebelyn Pitao, a 20-year old teacher and daughter of a Red commander. She was abducted, raped, tortured and killed by the military three years ago. Rode-

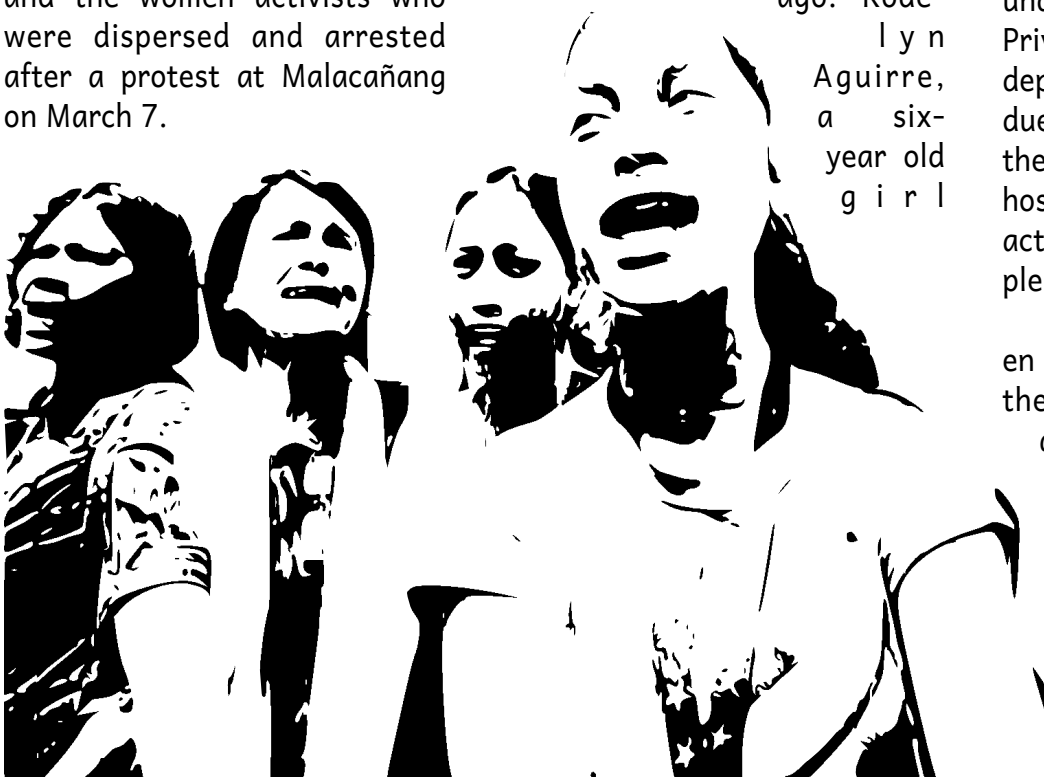
ly n Aguirre, a six-year old girl

killed by elements of the 61st IB in March 2012 still cries out for justice. The case against the soldiers responsible for the death of nine-year old peasant girl Grecil Buya in March 2007 has come to nothing after six long years.

These heinous crimes against women and children come to mind, especially as the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) marks its 15th year of non-compliance by successive reactionary governments, including the Aquino regime.

On top of all this is the rape of Inang Bayan by the AquinoObama combine, which was how the progressive women dubbed the US-Aquino regime. The regime's policies are a huge blow to the poor, especially the women. Tens of thousands have been forcibly evacuated because of the regime's all-out support for foreign mining, including its use of paramilitary units to attack and expel national minority communities. Thousands have also lost their homes because of widespread demolitions to give way to projects of big business under the guise of the Public-Private Partnership. Millions are deprived of basic social services due to huge budgetary cuts and the privatization of schools and hospitals. These are also daily acts of violence against the people, especially the women.

This 8th of March, the women showed their fiery anger at their intensifying oppression and exploitation. They burned a big wanted poster of "AquinoObama" because of this tandem's plunder and destruction of the economy and natural resources and the massive attacks on women's rights and welfare. **AB**



USS Emory S. Land docks anew at Subic

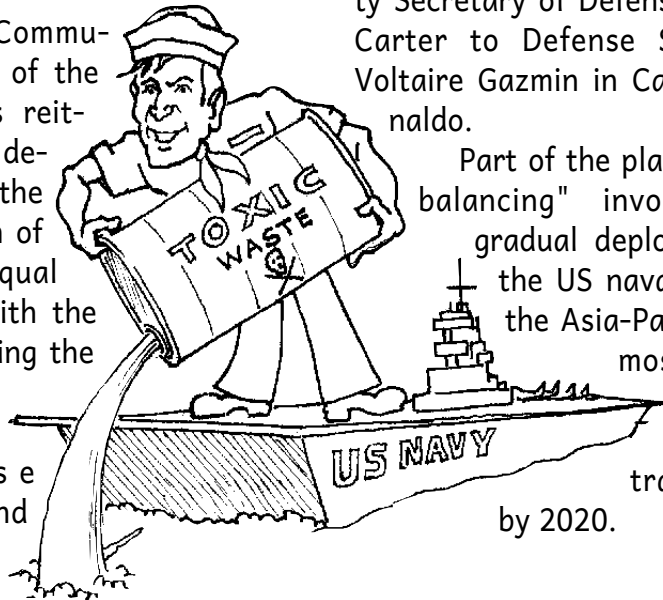
The Communist Party of the Philippines roundly condemned the docking anew of the USS Emory S. Land at Subic Bay on March 15, a few months after the ship was involved in the dumping of toxic waste at Subic Bay.

In October, a ship belonging to Glenn Defense Marine Asia was reported to have dumped 200,000 liters of used oil and human waste from the USS Emory S. Land at a portion of Subic Bay within the Philippines' economic zone and fishing grounds.

This act shows the US' contempt for the Filipino people who have long been struggling to put an end to US military intervention and presence in the Philippines.

The US' violation of Philippine sovereignty becomes all the more brazen since the USS Guardian's running aground and destruction of more than a hectare of coral reefs at Tubbataha have yet to be resolved. As of now, only half of the ship has been removed from the protected area.

The Communist Party of the Philippines reiterates its demand for the abrogation of all unequal treaties with the US, including the RP - US Mutual Defense Treaty and



the Visiting Forces Agreement, which both pave the way for US military intervention and its violation of Philippine sovereignty.

In a related development, the Philippines and the US agreed during a March 19 meeting to hold "frequent and active consultations" to develop defense relations and implement the "rebalancing" of US forces in the Pacific. The meeting took place during a visit by US Deputy Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter to Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin in Camp Aguinaldo.

Part of the planned "rebalancing" involves the gradual deployment of the US naval fleet to the Asia-Pacific until most of it has been transferred by 2020.

AB